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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [MOPS](#) [PHUM](#) [KPKO](#) [CG](#)  
SUBJECT: PRESIDENT KABILA PROVIDES BRIEFING ON RWANDAN  
FORCES IN DRC

Classified By: Ambassador William Garvelink for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)  
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¶1. (C) Summary: President Kabila met with UNSC Ambassadors on January 20 to provide an update on events in the Eastern Congo, particularly the entry of Rwandan Defense Force (RDF) soldiers into DRC territory earlier that day. Following the meeting, Kabila and Ambassador met alone briefly. Kabila announced the beginning of a 15-day operation led by the FARDC and supported by the RDF against the FDLR. Kabila acknowledged the risks and uncertainties in undertaking this operation. He asked for close cooperation with MONUC and for assistance from the international community to meet humanitarian needs, to support DRC-Rwandan rapprochement, and to implement the Actes d'Engagement signed in Goma in January 2008. Kabila noted in passing that the mini-summit on the DRC in Addis would not take place. End Summary.

¶2. (C) On January 20, President Kabila convoked UNSC Ambassadors, plus the Belgian and South African Ambassadors, to provide a briefing on the situation in the East. Kabila seemed relaxed, positive, and determined to resolve the FDLR and CNDP problems "once and for all." He recapped events of the last six months, emphasizing that the discussions with the CNDP and FDLR had yielded little so far and that the answer now was a military operation. He added that the door would always be open to consider a political solution.

¶3. (C) In December, the GDRC and GoR had planned the military operation, which began early morning January 20. It had three phases. The first phase, dealing with the CNDP and, in particular, Bosco, had been completed. (Comment: Kabila did not make any reference to Nkunda during the meeting. End Comment.) The second phase, a FARDC deployment to control the DRC-Rwandan border, was partially completed. The third phase, military operations against the FDLR, began January 20. According to Kabila, the operation will last fifteen days and has two objectives. The first objective is to disrupt or destroy the FDLR headquarters in Masisi and the second objective is to eliminate the FDLR units close to the DRC-Rwandan border, which Rwanda views as a threat. In a private pull-aside with Kabila, Ambassador expressed some skepticism that two weeks would be sufficient to deal once and for all with the FDLR. Kabila acknowledged the point and said that fighting would likely continue for more than two weeks, but that Rwanda's participation would end after fifteen days.

¶4. (C) Kabila stated that between 200-500 Rwandan troops, all intelligence officers, were now in the DRC. Their purpose would be two-fold: to assist with the integration of CNDP forces into the FARDC and to observe and advise on FARDC operations against the FDLR. (Comment: We have reports from various sources in Eastern Congo and Rwanda that the number of RDF troops in the DRC exceeds 2,000 and that they are

light infantry and not intelligence officers. When Ambassador mentioned this to Kabila privately, he said he would verify the numbers. Either Kabila was being very disingenuous or there is a major disconnect between Rwanda and the DRC over Rwanda's participation in this operation. End Comment.)

¶15. (C) Kabila acknowledged that there were risks in undertaking this operation. He focused on potential humanitarian consequences, stressing that he would need help from the international community in this area. Kabila said he did not know whether the local populations would side with the FDLR or the government, or how the FDLR would react. He said his overriding objective was peace and that sacrifices were necessary to achieve this goal.

¶16. (C) Kabila concluded by asking for the support of the international community first in meeting the humanitarian needs that will result from this military operation, and also for continued support from the international community and facilitation for the Goma peace process, including the integration/demobilization of the other rebel groups. In passing, he declared that the mini-summit on the DRC in Addis was no longer necessary. According to Kabila, the DRC would continue talks with the CNDP, but probably in Goma. (Comment: It was unclear as to what role he saw for UN Special Envoy Obasanjo. End Comment.)  
GARVELINK